

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Child passenger safety media campaign to focus on new booster seat law**

INDIANAPOLIS – A statewide advertising campaign sponsored by the Governor's Council on Impaired & Dangerous Driving begins this weekend to highlight the new booster seat law that will take effect July 1.

The law requires all children under eight to be properly secured in child safety seats or booster seats. It also requires all kids up to age 16 to be properly restrained in a child restraint system or a seat belt in all seating positions in all vehicles. Those over age 16 must be restrained when riding in the front seat of passenger vehicles.

"This law is going to protect our most vulnerable Hoosiers by requiring parents to make sure their children are properly restrained," said Charlotte Ashburn, director of the Traffic Safety Division of the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute, which houses the Governor's Council.

"Additionally, the law makes it clear that everyone under 16 must be buckled up, no matter what kind of vehicle they're in or where they're sitting in it," Ashburn said. Currently, those riding in pickup trucks or sport-utility vehicles with truck license plates are not required to abide by Indiana's seat belt law.

The new media campaign, which emphasizes the need for booster seats and the effective date of the new law, is aimed at parents of young children and grandparents who might be transporting young children in their vehicles. The campaign will be seen on television, radio and outdoor media across the state, and the image for the outdoor campaign is attached to this release as a PDF file.

In the United States, an average of six children 0-14 years old were killed and 694 were injured every day in motor vehicle crashes during 2003.

Children, as they grow, should progress through three types of child safety seats before using the seat belt alone: (1) rear-facing seats to (2) forward facing seats to (3) booster seats.

Booster seats raise children up so that seat belts fit properly. Eighty-three percent of children between the ages of four and eight are inappropriately placed in adult seat belts.

"We're educating about this law now because we wanted to give parents enough time to prepare before it takes effect, although we want to encourage them to get their kids properly secured as soon as possible," Ashburn said.

Those who violate the new law will commit a Class D infraction, which carries a \$25 fine. However, offenders can avoid the fine if they prove that they have obtained an adequate restraint system for their children. Fines collected under the law will be deposited into a state fund that will be used to make grants to public and private organizations for the purchase and distribution of child restraint systems to those who are otherwise unable to afford them.

For more information regarding child passenger safety, please contact the Automotive Safety Program at 1-800-KID-N-CAR or visit [www.preventinjury.org](http://www.preventinjury.org).